

Gridrunner™

By Jeff Minter

SCENARIO

In the year 2190, the human race has set up a huge solar-power collecting power station in Earth orbit to beam power down to earth. Because of its lattice-like shape, this power station is known simply as "The Grid". Shortly after beginning operation, the grid was found to be delivering less power than predicted. Investigation teams were sent into orbit. They discovered that the grid had been invaded by alien Droids, who were using its power to reproduce themselves, massing for an invasion of Earth. To combat the Droids, a special combat ship was developed. The ship drew its power from the grid and, with such vast amounts of energy readily available, was able to carry an awesomely powerful plasma cannon.

This ship, known as the Gridrunner, was so fast and powerful that, with skillful control, it could annihilate vast amounts of hostile Droids.

The Droids have 3 main weapons: Gridsearch Squads, Pods, and X/Y Zappers.

Gridsearch Squads

These are linked Droid segments which traverse the grid horizontally, descending whenever they encounter an obstruction. Each squad has a rotating 'Leader Droid'. If the leader is hit, the Droid segment behind him takes over. If the squad is hit in the body, it splits into two independent squads.

Squads come in any size, from solitary Leader Droids to linked squads of many Droids.

Whenever a squad Droid is hit, his body turns into a Pod. Squad Droids are vulnerable to their own X/Y Zapper, and may be hit or split by them.

Pods

These small yellow devices lodge at the boundaries of the grid, periodically growing in size and changing shape. When they reach the end of their life

cycle they hurl a single bolt of unstoppable, lethal energy down the grid.

Hitting a Pod regresses it one stage in its life cycle. Repeated hits will eventually destroy the Pods.

X/Y Zappers

These two ships run along the boundaries of the grid. Periodically they stop, and the Y-Zapper emits a plasma beam. The X-Zapper fires a plasma pulse along the grid, and where the two meet, a new Pod forms. It is not wise to get caught in the plasma beam from the Y-Zapper. The longer it is on, the more are your chances of losing the ship. The plasma pulse from the X-Zapper is also lethal. The frequency of the X/Y Zappers is variable and increases with each skill level.

STARTING GRIDRUNNER™

Be sure Commodore 64 is turned off. Plug in the Gridrunner™ cartridge into the expansion port and turn on the power. The game will start automatically.

You may freeze the action by pressing the 'P' key, and then press 'P' again to restart.

CONTROLLING THE GRIDRUNNER

Your Gridrunner can move freely on the bottom 7 lines of the grid. You cannot move through the Pods. You will be destroyed if you are hit by a Droid, the charge from a Pod, or a heavy plasma beam or pulse. Use the joystick to maneuver your Gridrunner. The red button activates your plasma cannon. As long as you hold down the red button, your cannon will repeat-fire. This is useful for quick annihilation of Pods close to the Gridrunner.

SCORING

For each Pod successfully destroyed: 10 points
for each Droid segment: 100 points
for each Leader Droid: 400 points
for zapping 1 gridful of Droids: 1 extra Gridrunner.

ATTACK WAVES

There are 31 distinct attack waves. In each wave an ever-increasing number of Droids are released onto the grid in various patterns. When one wave is entirely cleared, an extra Gridrunner is awarded (up to a maximum of 9). After a short pause the next gridful will appear.

Instead of working your way through each grid level, you can go directly to any level you wish. At the beginning of each game, when GRID 01 is shown, push the joystick forward and the grid levels will start to increase. Push the fire button when the desired level has been reached.

STRATEGIES

1. Keep on the move. If you stay firing in one place, Pods will form above you and often explode while your attention is elsewhere.
2. Remember to use your full mobility. Don't just stay on the bottom line. When Gridsearch Squads reach the bottom, be prepared for them to re-enter higher up the grid.
3. Use rapid-fire to clear Pods in your zone. Gridsearchers will have to travel right across the screen, giving you more time to pick them off.
4. Don't use rapid-fire all the time. You will survive better if you take the time to aim.
5. DON'T PANIC!

Gridrunner is a very fast game. Don't let the speed intimidate you. Good players will be looking for scores over 150,000, and aces will be getting over 200,000.